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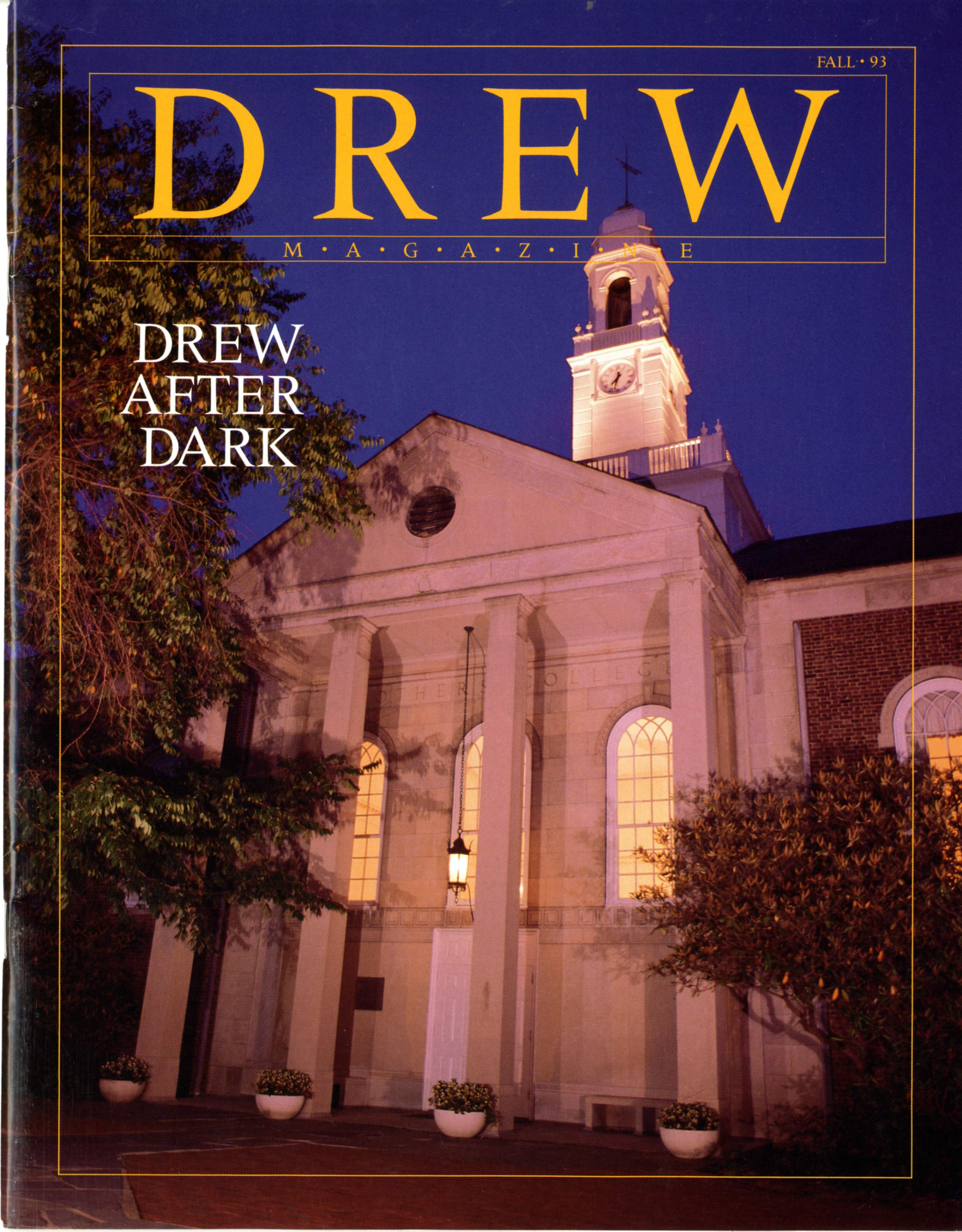


DREW AFTER DARK

Inspired by a segment on CBS-TV's "48 Hours" about Manhattan from midnight to dawn, Ray Smith C'89 visited campus during the night of Thursday, April 29, 1993. His interest was not on what happens behind closed doors. Rather, he took a look at the public life of the University between the time that Domino's delivers the last pizza of the night, and the cooks in the Commons flip the first pancake of the morning.

AFTER DARK

By Ray Smith C'89

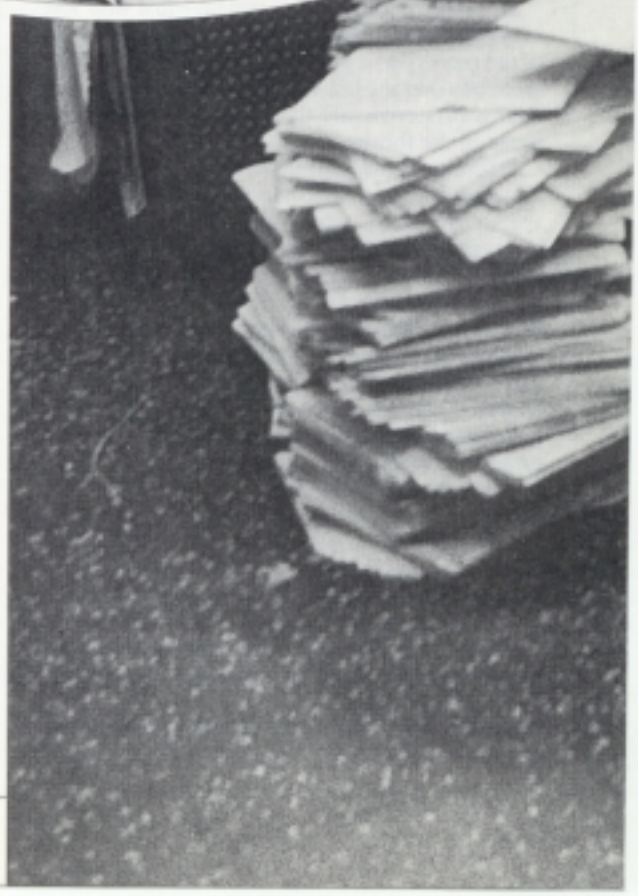
DREW

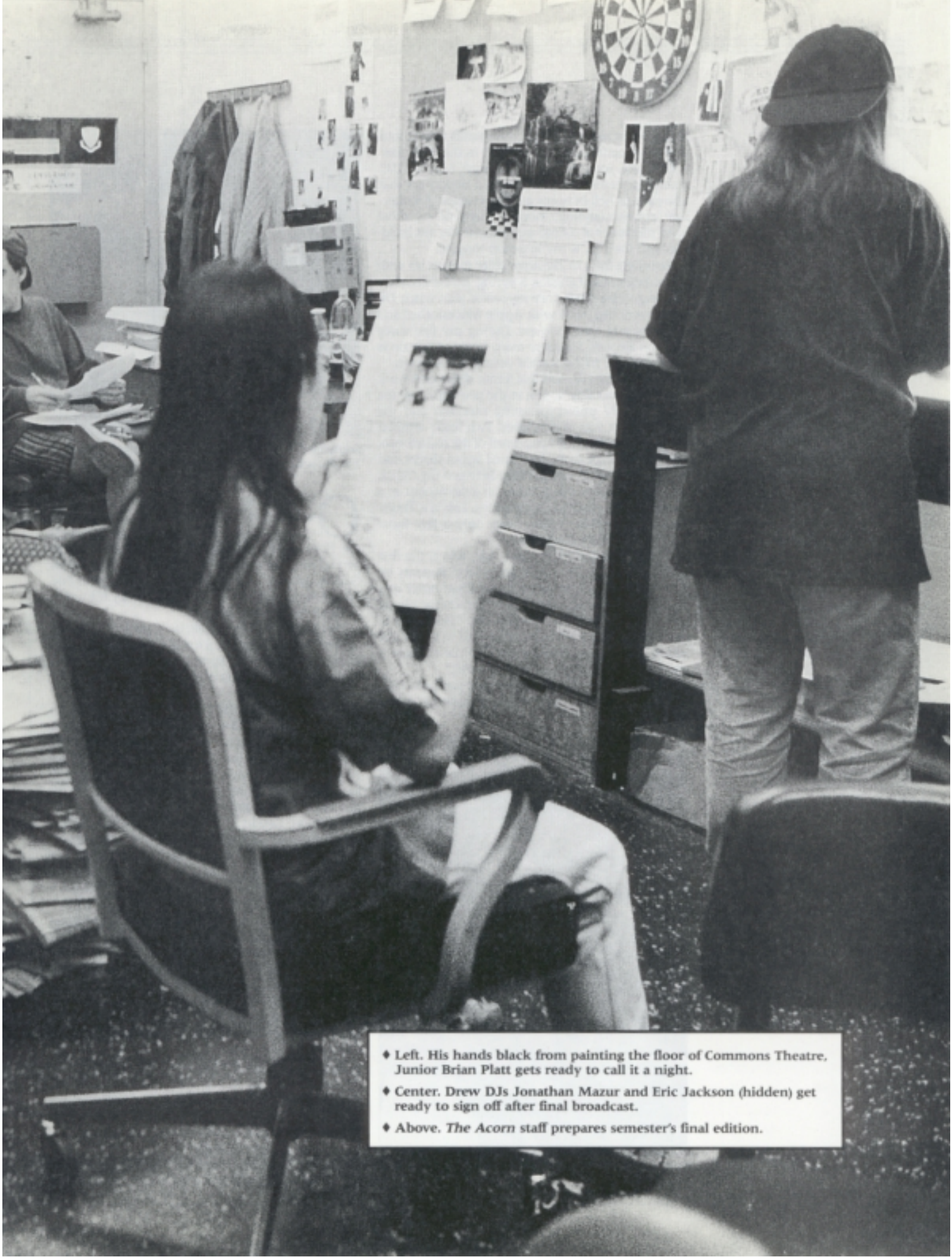
What struck me first is what always strikes me when I return to campus: the stillness. Even after an hour in a darkened bus, arriving at Drew from Manhattan feels like stepping off a plane in the Bahamas in January, when the warm ocean breezes drift over a body that still *thinks* it's winter. No rumbling subways, no car alarms, no blaring radios.

During a daylight visit, even little details still seem familiar, like the cafe tables outside the University Center and the maroon brick window ledges in Hoyt-Bowne. But at night, places have a way of taking on a very different presence.

At minutes before midnight, as I walk across the lawn from the Main Gate to the University Center, I see the clock tower at Brothers College glowing with more of a purplish tint than I had remembered. At every turn, the campus, like a botanical garden, is ablaze with daffodils. Mead Hall, recently reopened after

Ray Smith, a frequent contributor to DREW *magazine, spent many a sleepless night during his four years at Drew.*





- Left. His hands black from painting the floor of Commons Theatre, Junior Brian Platt gets ready to call it a night.
- Center. Drew DJs Jonathan Mazur and Eric Jackson (hidden) get ready to sign off after final broadcast.
- Above. *The Acorn* staff prepares semester's final edition.

its three-year restoration, still commands the campus with its magnificent portico, even in the darkness.

Of course, some things never change. Alas, the U.C. is among them—still that relic of a design era that also gave us bell-bottoms and lava lamps. Architecture notwithstanding, though, many of my most vivid memories of college are connected to this building, and the U.C. is my first stop tonight.

Returning there to *The Acorn* office to meet up with Photo Editor Karl Langdon is jarring. It's the first time I've been in the office since my senior year, when *The Acorn* went high-tech with Apple Macintoshes and scanners and laser printers. During my first three years on the staff, I spent so many hours editing news copy that one friend started calling me Raycorn.

Now, it's a far cry from that frantic disheveled work place. Most notably absent in the new office are the wheezing old phototypesetting machine and the mad-scientist vats of developer. Two really familiar sensations remain: the acrid smell of the melted wax used to stick type to the blue-lined layout sheets, and the strange mood—somewhere between the frantic and the comatose—that settles on a newsroom as a late-night final deadline approaches. This is a Thursday night, and the editors have only a few more hours to get everything done.

Having graduated four years ago, this is the first year that I no longer know any of the students on campus, so it was no surprise that I had never met Karl before, although we had spoken on the phone about tonight's logistics. He tells me, "Things are in good shape, but I still have some stuff to do for *The Acorn*. So I'll have to come back to the darkroom every so often. I hope you understand."

We decide to make a loop around campus, visiting a few locales I have in mind while he shoots photos.

Grad student Lisa Ward casts wary eye at photographer from inside guardhouse at entrance to campus.

Bahaa Kandil: ghostmeister and occasional international host.

Sophomore Rob Fowler waits patiently until 1 a.m. when he can close the U.C.

Our most interesting stop in the U.C. is a visit with custodian Bahaa Kandil. There's more to the Egyptian-born Kandil than meets the eye. How many people at Drew have mounted a one-person show of their abstract paintings in the Korn Gallery, greeted visiting diplomats from Egypt, and hosted the Egyptian National Field Hockey team during its 1989 visit to campus?

Tonight, Kandil is running a vacuum around the pool tables. We knew he'd remember Karl, who had written a memorably surreal *Acorn* interview with the custodian and his co-worker Millie Locket (out sick tonight).

I wasn't sure Kandil would remember me, but indeed he does recall how we met. It was late one night during fall orientation week. Some friends and I had climbed into the U.C. through the window of *The Acorn* office. That was fairly standard procedure for us editors (not anymore, since the window now has bars), and I thought it was a perfectly normal thing to do. Kandil disagreed, and we soon found ourselves being interrogated by two security officers. In short order, everything was cleared up. I had a key to *The Acorn* office, and we all had Drew IDs, so they let us go unpunished (as did the dean of students a week later).

For Kandil, all that is ancient history on this quiet night. His job done, before parting for home he notes that he's glad to be working in the U.C. rather than in such old haunts as Great Hall and Mead Hall. There, he claims, ghost sightings are not uncommon. Even the severe oil painting of Roxanna Mead Drew in the front lobby of Mead Hall can be spooky at night, he says: "When you're doing something, it always seems like she's watching you." Much better, he concedes, to be among the living in the U.C.

As Karl and I set out on campus, we pass Riker, where I reflexively check to see if the lights are on in my room from senior year. (They aren't, although there seemed to be a party happening nearby. But we skip that—we're looking for things happening in public, not in private). We climb the Aztec Steps, far more awash in fluorescent light than back in the

campus "dark ages," and head down to the Tolley-Brown circle.

Once at the nether reaches of campus, we descend into the first floor of Tolley Hall, known semi-affectionately as "The Pit." That floor, my home as a first-year student, had acquired its nickname when a quirk of landscaping left its northwest face almost underground but the southeast face looming high above the edge of the Zuck Arboretum.

Our first destination is one floor further down, the broadcast studio of WMNJ. We wait until the red "On the Air" sign goes off before we knock on the door and introduce ourselves to DJs Jonathan Mazur and Eric Jackson. As I explain my mission, the two just look at each other, no doubt thinking some friends had set them up. I soon find out why: this is truly a special night, the last-ever broadcast of their three-year-old radio show, "Sounds in the Darkness," a specialty program of jazz, Motown, oldies, and classic rock.

In Mazur's off-the-air breaks, he tells me that "Sounds in the Darkness" has built up something of a following. Although the station's 10 watts barely carry off campus, Mazur says the show has been received in South Carolina (according to a short-wave listener who called the station) and in California (albeit over the phone lines, when the duo played a birthday request for a friend's mother).

This night, though, the listeners are probably much closer to home, picking up "In the Air Tonight" and "Help Me Rhonda" via their radios and the "Drew Channel" on the campus broadband cable system. This being their swan song, Mazur and Jackson also feature sentimental excerpts from previous shows, including Halloween, Christmas, and April Fools' Day specials, as well as highlights of Drew's two *a cappella* groups, 36 Madison Avenue and No Basses.

Yet, eventually, their show has to come to an end, and Mazur flips on the mike for its finale. "The time has come for us to say goodbye. Sadly, we won't be back next week, or ever. I can't tell you how much I'm going to miss this show, miss Eric, and miss all of you." The two offer their familiar sign-off: "I'm Jonathan Mazur. . .and I'm Eric Jackson. . .and together we are 'Sounds in the Darkness,' the longest-running specialty show on WMNJ, 88.9 FM Madison/Chatham, the voice of Drew University." They spin a few final songs, ending with Peggy Lee singing "Is That All There Is. . .?"

That is almost all there is for us tonight, although we do take a ride around campus about 3 a.m. with Sgt. Ken Florence. Construction of the new Forum and Athletic Center prevents him from completing a full loop around campus, but he snakes around Campus Drive. When not responding to calls for medical problems or fire alarms, Florence monitors vehicles and watches for off-campus troublemakers. Generally, not much is happening, he says, a fact he doesn't mind at all. "The quieter the better," says Florence. "No news is good news."

Of course, the editorial board still laboring in the offices of *The Acorn* would have heartily disagreed. Although it's now past 4 a.m., a few stalwart souls are keeping the traditional Thursday night vigil needed to put out the newspaper, in this case, the final edition of the school year.

Editor-in-Chief Kelly Wieme and Executive Editor F. Brett Weigl have just completed the third issue under the newly elected editorial board. The transition has been smooth, she says, and this week's production schedule has proceeded without a hitch. Just before 5 a.m., they dot the last "i"s, cross the last "t"s, and bundle up the layout sheets to be driven to the printer in Hillside. All that remains is for the editors to clean up the office before the start of its summer hibernation. "We should do it tomorrow," says Wieme to Weigl as she heads for Hillside. "I'll see you in the morning. . ."

But, of course, it is already morning. By a quarter past five, the sky has lightened, dawn has broken and the first Manhattan-bound bus of the morning is on its way. ■

Pub managers Allen McKay and Linda Herbert keep floor clean and The Pub financially solvent.

Brenna McCarthy, Andrea Caliz, and Brian Koenan camp out in the library's late night study lounge.

Photos by Karl Langdon